

Emergency Response News



March 2003

IDEM joins local, state and federal agencies to respond to an anhydrous ammonia release following a snowmobile accident at a farm in Lake County

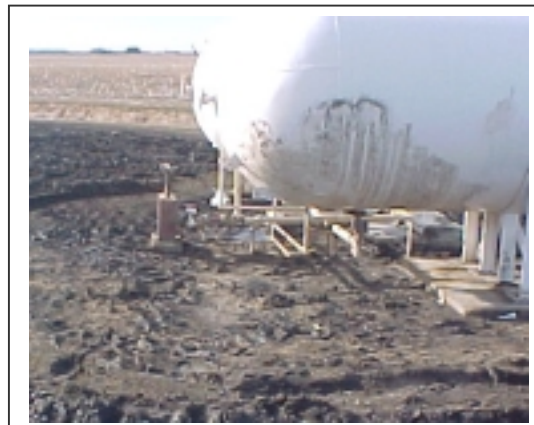
The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) oversaw cleanup actions following an anhydrous ammonia spill from a bulk storage tank at a farm along Calumet Avenue and near a small creek, northwest of Cedar Lake in Lake County. Other agencies assisting included Lake County Sheriff's Department, Lake County Fire Department, Local Emergency Planning Commission, Lake County Fire Chiefs Association, Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

On December 28, 2002, the sheriff's department called an IDEM On Scene Coordinator about an anhydrous ammonia release from a bulk storage tank, following a snowmobile accident. The operator of the snowmobile crashed into a 12,500-gallon tank and died at the scene. The impact cracked the off loading pipe at the base of the unit, which released anhydrous ammonia into the air, soil and water of a nearby creek.

Local firefighters responded and observed a large cloud of anhydrous ammonia, moving northeast from the accident site. Residents whose homes were located in the path of the plume were instructed to take protective measures. Firefighters used a floor jack to lift and push the damaged pipe back into the tank, which slowed the release of anhydrous ammonia.

The property owner hired a contractor to conduct the cleanup. Initially, workers were hindered by freezing temperatures as they secured the piping, off loaded the product and cleaned up the contaminated water and soil. Once the workers were able to change the piping and install a valve stem on the damaged storage tank, they off loaded approximately 2,500 gallons of product from the damaged unit into two tankers. Contaminated soil in the creek bed and around the two storage tanks at the site was excavated and stockpiled until it could be land applied. Dams, pits and trenches were built to recover and contain product in the creek. Contaminated water in the creek was removed. The U.S Environmental Protection Agency staff monitored the air during the cleanup.

IDEM's On Scene Coordinators monitored the water in the creek and oversaw the initial cleanup actions.



Site Snapshot

IDEM Actions:

Investigated and oversaw initial cleanup of a chemical spill, which impacted the air, soil and surface water.

Location:

Farmland and creek along Calumet Avenue, northwest of Cedar Lake, Lake County

Primary substance of concern:

Anhydrous ammonia

Environmental threats:

Surface water, soil and air contamination and potential ground water contamination.

For further information about IDEM's emergency response actions at this site, contact staff at the following phone numbers or at IDEM's toll free phone number, (800) 451-6027:

David Cage, On Scene Coordinator
Emergency Response Section
(317) 308-3029

Greg Carter, On Scene Coordinator
Emergency Response Section
(317) 308-3036

Max Michael, Section Chief
Emergency Response Section
(317) 308-3049